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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 MANAMA 000609

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [BA](#)  
SUBJECT: WAFa': A NEW SHIA REJECTIONIST MOVEMENT

REF: A. 08 MANAMA 536

[1B](#). 08 MANAMA 592

[1C](#). 08 MANAMA 593 D. MANAMA 50 E. MANAMA 172 F. MANAMA 190 G. MANAMA 557 Classified By: CDA Christopher Henzel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

- 1.(SBU) Summary: The new Shia opposition grouping Wafa' ("loyalty") is competing with an older radical group for the leadership of the minority
- 2.(C) Introduction: The small Haq movement has opposed Shia participation in Bahrain's elections since its founding in 2005. During the first f
- 3.(SBU) Abdulwahab Hussain and Shia cleric Abduljalil Maqdad announced February 6 that they had established a new Shia opposition grouping. The
- 4.(SBU) Wafa' aims to pressure the government to include the extra-parliamentary Shia opposition in a 'national dialogue'. It calls for the est
- 5.(C) Wafa' leader Hussain appears to be pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to achieve these goals. -- He and other leaders hold open seminars i
- 6.(SBU) Wafa' and Haq compete for the same Shia oppositionist base. Both have declined to register with the government, as required by Bahraini
- 7.(SBU) Personal Standing: Abdulwahab Hussain's stature and credibility as a conservative leader is much greater than Musheima's. Hussain was h
- 8.(SBU) Religious Cover: In order to secure popular support in the Shia community, politicians must have religious support for their policies a
- 9.(SBU) Composition: Wafa' is a Shia movement in a way that Haq is not. Haq's membership is overwhelmingly Shia, but it has included a few Sunn
- 10.(SBU) Leading Shia clerics Isa Qassim and Abduljalil Maqdad have had a contentious relationship for years. Qassim acquired his status of Aya
- 11.(SBU) Abduljalil Maqdad led those who publicly disagreed with Qassim's support of Shia participation in the political process, and resigned
- 12.(SBU) Wifaq leaders have consistently argued that Wafa' does not represent a significant sector of the Shia street and will prove to be a pa
- 13.(C) While Wafa' remains small, it is a prominent topic of conversation among politically-conscious Bahrainis. The editor of Bahrain's larges
- 14.(C) Faisal Fulad, a Sunni Shura council member and President of the government supported NGO Bahrain Human Rights Watch Society (BHRWS), bla
- 15.(SBU) Abdulwahab Hussain: Abdulwahab Hussain was one of the most prominent Shia activists during the 1990s' unrest. Hussain remained in Bahr
- 16.(SBU) Shaikh Abduljalil Al Maqdad: Maqdad is a prominent Shia cleric who runs his own Hawza (Shia seminary). His admirers call him "Wise Mer